

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method to ~~additionally~~ optionally test a patient's specimen contained in an original sample container using an analyzer after tests on a first aliquot portion taken from the patient's specimen are completed, the method comprising the steps of:

providing bar code indicia on the original sample container to indicate a predetermined period of storage time;

extracting a first aliquot portion of the patient's specimen from the original sample container;

providing an aliquot storage vessel;

extracting a second aliquot portion of the patient's specimen from the original sample container and ~~retaining~~ dispensing said second aliquot portion in said aliquot storage vessel;

operating the analyzer to perform tests on the first aliquot portion;

storing said aliquot storage vessel containing the second aliquot portion within a storage compartment within said analyzer for said predetermined period of storage time; and,

additionally optionally testing the second aliquot specimen portion during said predetermined period of time.

Claim 2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the storage compartment comprises environmentally controlled conditions.

Claim 3. (canceled)

Claim 4. (original) The method of claim 1 where the aliquot storage vessel is an aliquot strip having a number of open aliquot wells therein.

Claim 5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the aliquot storage vessel to be stored is covered with layer of protective film.

Claim 6. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising disposing of said second aliquot portion of the patient's specimen after said period of time is expired.

Claim 7. (canceled)

Claim 8. (previously presented) A method to additionally test a patient's specimen contained in an original sample container using an analyzer after tests on a first aliquot portion taken from the patient's specimen are completed, the method comprising the steps of:

- providing bar code indicia on the original sample container to indicate the tests to be completed on the patient's sample;

- extracting a first aliquot portion of the patient's specimen from the original sample container;

- providing an aliquot storage vessel;

- extracting a second aliquot portion of the patient's specimen from the original sample container and retaining said second aliquot portion in said aliquot storage vessel;

- operating the analyzer to perform said tests on the first aliquot portion;

- using the identity of said tests to determine a storage period of time for said second aliquot portion;

- storing said aliquot storage vessel containing the second aliquot portion for said storage period of time within an environmentally controlled storage compartment within said analyzer; and,

- additionally testing the second aliquot specimen portion during said storage period of time.

Claim 9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein tests for multiple analytes are to be performed on the specimen, and wherein the bar code indicia on the original sample container indicate a period of time associated with each of the multiple analytes, the method further comprising:

- additionally testing the second aliquot portion for a given analyte only during a time period before the period of time associated with the given analyte passes.

Claim 10. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein tests for multiple analytes are to be performed on the specimen, and wherein the bar code indicia on the original sample container indicate a period of time associated with each of the multiple analytes, the method further comprising:

 additionally testing the second aliquot portion for a given analyte during a time period after the period of time associated with the given analyte passes; and,
 displaying an alert signal or message indicating that the additional test results were obtained on a specimen retained within the storage for period of time longer than the period of time associated with the given analyte.

Claim 11. (canceled)